shifting look. I had seen the man at Thomas' house among the peasants who came to invite the teachers to their homes. I had also noticed him in the school: he had knelt in the blinking light of the candle, at the end of the first row, with his right hand raised. I said to him:

"I shall be glad to answer your questions, my friend."

"Tell me the truth," he repeated. "From where comes the cow death? Who sends it to us—the Tsar or the students?"

"The cow death? What do you mean?"

"Men in uniform were sent into the country to let the cow death loose. But they had a rule about the cow death: the muzhik's stalls are open to it, and the landlord's are closed. The men in uniform ride around and bar the roads. Three crosses make the barrier. Seven days can death stay in each village, until the men come and take the crosses away and let death loose, to move to another village. And the men. . ."

"What men?" I interrupted him. I had an uneasy feeling the man was insane. But he continued with subdued passion.

"Mister, you must know these men. They say that they do the will of their master, but they do not tell who their master is. Some say they are sent by the Tsar to punish the poor people, and others say they are sent by the strikers to make more trouble. . ."

"I don't understand," I interrupted again. "Let us talk with Thomas; he must know."

"I have talked with him," the peasant replied. "Either he doesn't know or he dares not tell the truth. Whom should we trust?"

The door of the teacher's house opened. Thomas appeared in the quadrangle of light. I shouted to him, "Please come here."

In the darkness Thomas could not see me, but he recognized my voice. He crossed the street, stepped up to the school porch, looked closely into the face of the peasant, and said to him kindly, "Are you still asking about the cow death, Egor?"

"What else would I ask?" replied the peasant.

"I told you the truth," said Thomas. "A dangerous cattle disease broke out. To stop it, the doctors must know what places are infected. Therefore they try to isolate each village for observation. They call this quarantine."

"You told me this, Thomas," the peasant agreed cheerlessly. "But those men in uniform are not doctors. What kind of men are they?"

"Don't you trust me, Egor?" asked the teacher.

"I do, but what is the truth?"

"Let us talk about this matter once more, indoors. Come into the house."

Despite the late hour, the teacher's house was still full of gay ex-